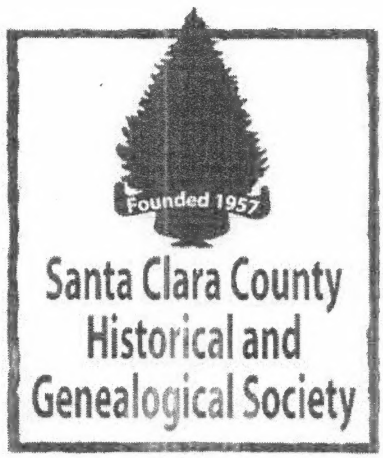
Historic Houses of San Jose

Written as part of the Federal Writers' Project, a Works Progress Administration (WPA) Project, 1936

Notes:

- Author unknown, possibly Helen Jaret or Eleanor Irwin
- Original in possession of the Santa Clara County Archives, San Jose, California
- Scanned by the Santa Clara Historical and Genealogical Society



Federal Writers' Projects
District 9

April 8, 1936

23

S-612

HISTORICAL - CLASS II

HISTORIC HOUSES OF SAN JOSE

STOCKTON HOUSE, one of the oldest homes in San Jose, is the ranch house of Commodore Stockton; a frame building which was shipped around the Horn. It now stands in weather-beaten condition, at the corner of Spring and Newhall streets, facing the acres of rich, black soil which were once the Stockton ranch and are now used for truck farming.

The house itself was put up in 1850 and was part of a shipload of ten which Stockton imported on speculation. He intended to sub-divide his property and set up the houses as homes. At that time sawn lumber was so scarce and expensive that it was cheaper to ship the lumber, all cut to size for a house, from the east by water. Stockton had previously ordered sixty pre-fabricated houses for his "Alameda Gardens" sub-division, but these burned up in San Francisco harbor after being brought with great trouble around the Horn.

The old house is square with a porch running around three sides and a cupola at the peak of the roof. The people living in it now (1936) know nothing about it except that it is an old house and once belonged to Stockton.

KENNEDY HOUSE: This is a pretentious old structure standing gaunt and alone on Spring street near the corner of Newhall and not far from the Stockton ranch house. Its mansard roof, ornamented windows, and the decorations which were considered "elegant" in its day, are in striking contrast with

April 8, 1936

S-612

HISTORICAL - CLASS II

HISTORIC HOUSES OF SAN JOSE
(continued)

the simple farmhouse style of the Stockton house. The Kennedy house dates from 1853, according to Professor Rockwell D. Hunt (Overland Monthly No. 3, Bound Volume 49, 1907), and was brought around the Horn.